



COLLEGE OF  
**VETERINARY MEDICINE**

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March 21, 2020

Dr. Gilmour,

The Professional Standards Committee (PSC) met on March 18, 2020 and reviewed the case of Mr. Jonathan Rivera-Pierola, a St. Matthews University student, who earned two "D" grades during his 4<sup>th</sup>-year clinical rotations. At this meeting, Mr. Rivera-Pierola was given the opportunity to:

1. Present mitigating circumstances relative to his below acceptable academic performance on Small Animal Internal Medicine (SAIM) and Community Practice (CP) rotations
2. Provide a compelling plan to improve his performance on clinical rotations

After meeting with Mr. Rivera-Pierola and thorough deliberation, it is the recommendation of the PSC that Mr. Rivera-Pierola be dismissed from our academic program. We do not take this recommendation lightly. Ultimately, our recommendation for dismissal was based on his repeated poor academic performances, lack of accountability for clinical errors in multiple rotations, recurrent unprofessional behavior, and inability to take constructive criticism to improve his professional and clinical skills.

Mr. Rivera-Pierola was first brought to the attention of the PSC on October 01, 2019 when he earned a "D" in SAIM. Mr. Rivera-Pierola was provided a thorough and constructive evaluation of his performance on SAIM particularly noting deficiencies in communication, attention to detail, patient care, completion of medical records, accurate history taking/preparation, and professionalism. At that time, the PSC recommended Mr. Rivera-Pierola remediate SAIM by repeating it. This was communicated to him on October 3, 2019 in a letter from Dr. Margi Gilmour, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Also in that letter, Mr. Rivera-Pierola was informed that he was placed on academic probation which is standard policy (Section X, CVM-OSU Handbook, 2019–2020) for any student that earns a "D" grade.

After earning a "D" in SAIM, Mr. Rivera-Pierola earned an "A" in the Theriogenology Elective, "C" in Equine Medicine, "C" in Zoological Medicine Elective, "C" in Small Animal ICU/EMS, "C" in Food Animal Medicine, and "B" in Radiology. Of note for these rotations that Mr. Rivera-Pierola passed, were unfavorable comments from his instructors. These comments demonstrated a repeated lack of clinical performance and in some cases, an inability to improve despite instruction from different clinicians on separate rotations. Please see his rotation evaluations for all comments, select examples are provided:

Equine Medicine: "... it seemed like you were reluctant to take cases. This is how you will learn the most during your clinical year. Additionally, I think punctuality could be improved. Your laid back attitude made you easy to work with but sometimes it could be viewed as lack of interest in cases."

Zoological Medicine: "You've shown some improvement but in several cases/instances, we have concern about your clinical judgement and interpretation of the information. Ensure with each case you have reviewed all details and not only remember to include these details in your medical record but also apply critical thinking to why each abnormality occurred. We recommend reviewing your previous cases and seeing the edits that were performed on these medical records. Consider the overall case. For example, an animal should not be considered healthy if you know it has active disease that you are treating it for...there are some aspect like giving injections or maintaining sterility of an IV line that are expected at this time..."

Small Animal ICU/EMS: "During the time in ICU, I felt as if Jonathan did struggle quite a bit. With patient treatments, he would take a prolonged amount of time completing a single patient. Also, when it came to trying to complete patient treatments, sometimes he would ask or tell his ICU shift partner to complete his

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**Exhibit 2**

patient treatments. Although he did improve with some communication from the technicians and his peers...Overall you did well...My biggest critique was not finishing one patient before beginning on another. When you do this, things will get missed or are done incorrectly..."

Food Animal: Your case log was pretty low owing to having more simple cases and fewer overall cases; we encourage you to remember to utilize your time on clinics as a learning opportunity. Was not as helpful to rotation mates and less working as a team member. I would recommend working hard to improve your basic knowledge and clinical skills; keep a positive and open attitude; don't be afraid to ask questions, but also when answering, try to focus on the specifics of the question and not just ramble something off to get an answer out...be thoughtful about your responses. Its ok not to know all the questions, just keep at it; Thanks and good luck!!"

On March 13, 2020, the PSC was informed that Mr. Rivera-Pierola earned a second "D" grade in CP. As he was already on academic probation, Mr. Rivera-Pierola was given the opportunity to present any mitigating circumstances to the PSC relative to his unsatisfactory performance. During the meeting, Mr. Rivera-Pierola continually implicated others for miscommunications that lead to conflicts with clinicians, indicated he was blamed for things he did not do, that he was wrongly accused, and that it was not fair he had SAIM for his first rotation at CVM-OSU. Furthermore Mr. Riveria-Pierola communicated little to take ownership of his situation and tell us how he was going to learn from this situation and improve his skills to become a clinical veterinarian. He did mention that he would essentially inundate the clinicians on his next rotations at every decision point as to what to do or what should be done. The PSC interpreted his response as an inappropriate course of action and that he would not willing to take ownership of his future clinical decisions.

It is the opinion of the PSC that Mr. Rivera-Pierola did not comprehend that the clinicians were trying to teach him to improve his clinical skills. Instead, he was fixated on several instances which he thinks caused him to be given the "D" grades as opposed to an overall level of below standard performance. It also become apparent to the PSC that Mr. Rivera-Pierola's professional relationship with CP clinicians deteriorated precipitously to the point it became toxic when they met to go through his rotation evaluation. Despite thorough and constructive comments from the clinicians, Mr. Rivera-Pierola's unprofessional response and inability to accept constructive criticism was deemed unacceptable by the PSC.

The PSC determined that Mr. Rivera-Pierola's mitigating circumstances were not sufficient to explain his unsatisfactory performance. Similarly, Mr. Rivera-Periola provided no logical plan of improvement for his training to become a clinical veterinarian. Of the four PSC members present during the meeting, all four voted to recommend dismissal of Mr. Rivera-Pierola from our professional curriculum. Two members of the PSC were not able to attend the meeting and did not vote.

Regards,

Professional Standards Committee (PSC) 2019–2020

Dr. Kelly Allen

Dr. Mike Davis

Dr. Erik Clary

Dr. Lyndi Gilliam

Dr. Myron Hinsdale

Dr. Mason Reichard, Chair